

Questions on Erving Goffman, Introduction to *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life*

1. How does information-seeking work between individuals?
2. What are the two kinds of sign activity Goffman notes and why does he say that the distinction is less important than we might initially think?
3. How can people compensate for “unintentional” impressions they may give off?
4. Why doesn't it matter whether people are “calculating” when they do this?
5. What does Goffman mean by “consensus” and why is it important?
6. Who controls the initial definition of a situation and why does it matter?
7. Why is there such interest in disruptions?

Questions on danah boyd, “Friends, Friendsters and the Top 8”

This reading is available online at http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_12/boyd/

Note: This article uses a concept from the sociologist Erving Goffman called “face.” Goffman defined “face” as “an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes.” boyd explains her use of Goffman here:

http://www.zephoria.org/alterity/archives/2004/11/erving_goffman.html

1. What are the traditional definitions of friends, and what role does friendship play in “face”?
2. What were Friendster.com's initial expectations for their site and how did early users deviate from those expectations?
3. What is a “Collector” and why is it important? What are the different kinds of Collectors and how are they understood differently by social network users?
4. Why do people have so many friends on social networking sites?
5. What were the issues introduced by the myspace.com Top 8 function? Who cared and who cared less?
6. Who were the early adopters of friendster.com and why did they all think the site was “for” them?
7. Why does boyd invoke Stokely Carmichael and social networking phenomenon what does his example illustrate?

8. boyd suggests that social networking sites are public, but presuppose some level of exclusion. What does she mean and why does this matter?

9. Is interest or affiliation more important for people's groupings on social networking sites? Why does it matter? How does this relate to her example of U.S. bill 4437?